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PREFACE.

I LAY no claim in the following pages to have thrown fresh light on the history of the Church and Priory of S. Mary at Usk, but merely to have collected into a consecutive narrative what is known. I desire to acknowledge gratefully the sources from which much of the information is derived. To Sir Edward Maunde Thompson, K.C.B., for permission to quote his "Chronicon Adæ de Uske"; to Lord Tredegar and Mr. St. John Hope, for access to the late Mr. Wakeman's MSS., in the possession of the Society of Antiquaries. I have also drawn upon the "Diocesan History of Llandaff," by the Rev. E. J. Newall; "Parish Priests and their People in the Middle Ages," by the Rev. Dr. Cutts; "Llandaff Church Plate," by Mr. G. E. Halliday; and other records, which are duly acknowledged.

The Priory, Usk,
March, 1904.

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THE CHURCH AND PRIORY OF SAINT MARY, USK.

ANOTHER chapter in the history of our Church having been added to the record of over eight centuries by the recent partial restoration of the portion that remains, it may be of interest to relate what has been done, and as we trust sooner or later the work may be resumed, it will not be amiss to suggest by the light of discovery the lines on which future operations should be carried on. A retrospective glance at the existing records of the Church and Priory, whose histories are so closely interwoven, will add to the interest of the narrative, although but little is known of the earliest history of the Church, and from a fragment only can we gather anything of its "story in stone."

The original Norman Church appears to have been founded about the latter half of the eleventh century; that is, soon after the Norman Conquest, an era so graphically described by Dean Spence in the work for which he has taken as a title the words of the Cluniac Monk, Ræoul Glaber, who, writing in 1030 the history of his own time, says, "The world, startled from its death sleep, put on its white robe of

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Churches." It may therefore be claimed that our Church formed a portion of that white robe which was spread over Christendom, and to which in our own land we owe many of the stateliest Cathedrals and most beautiful Churches throughout its breadth. Amongst the causes to which this religious revival may be attributed, Dr. Spence assigns one which may wholly or partially apply to that of Saint Mary at Usk, namely, a work of expiation.

The Lordship of Usk, and the fertile lands surrounding it, was assigned by the Conqueror to Turstin FitzRolfe, and in Mr. Wakeman's MSS. I find the following account:—

"When William was about to embark for England, the Hereditary Standard-bearer of Normandy refused to accompany him, on which the Duke, in a passion, snatched the standard from his hand and gave it to Turstin the Fair, son of Rolfe, 'a gallant young man who joyfully accepted it." In the Bayeux tapestry, said to have been the work of the Conqueror's Queen and her ladies, Turstin may be recognised by the Gonfanon, which appears to have been a pennon with three points."

He was succeeded by Richard de Clare as Lord of Usk, who was a half-brother of the Conqueror. Although the Castle is not mentioned, it probably existed in some form, and was enlarged and strengthened by its Norman lord, to whom the grant was made for his zeal in the process of subduing the conquered race, which continued for some years after the Conqueror's advent.

We may well imagine that, in accordance with the spirit of the age, he sought to atone for

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the bloodshed and misdeeds of his life by the dedication of a Church to Almighty God and the Blessed Virgin for the salvation of his soul, and he naturally selected a site near his Castle and the little collection of dwellings which surrounded and looked to it for shelter and protection. A fragment of this Church still remains, and from it we may imagine its reconstruction with considerable accuracy. The fragment of which I have spoken consists of the tower as high as the string-course at the top of the second story, and the portions of the four piers that enclose the space now used as a chancel. The Church, therefore, must have been cruciform, consisting of a nave, choir, and transepts, and a low and massive central tower at the crossing with a north-west angle stair-turret.

A fragmentary portion of the Norman wall of the nave is still visible on the south side, marked in the interior of the church by the pointing of the masonry, which indicates the line of fracture. Outside the eastern face of the tower the section of the piers clearly shews they were returned into a choir, the same with the transepts. The openings have been in each case filled with a screen of modern masonry. That the floor level was much lower is proved by the discovery of the bases of the piers of the tower fifteen inches below the level of the present pavement. The roof was of much lower pitch than at present, as is seen by the fact that the windows in the four faces of the tower, one of which now opens into the nave, formed a lantern to give light to the crossing from the outside, and it was probably supported on heavy beams reaching across the side walls. The windows, we may conjecture,

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were circular headed and small, somewhat similar in appearance to those in the present belfry. The general character of the fabric was plain and massive; the only ornament left to us is the remains of a diaper string-course round the top of the western piers, most of which has been hacked off to make a surface for the coat of cement which, until lately, covered the whole of the interior of the Church, and a dog-tooth moulding on the eastern arch of the crossing.

The church probably stood alone, and no doubt formed a striking contrast to the mean huts which were the dwellings of the inhabitants of the town. Of the excellence of the materials and workmanship we have ample testimony in what remains, which has certainly survived the vicissitudes of more than eight centuries.

As the division of the country into parishes was of much earlier origin, being traceable to the ninth century, it is probable that a parish priest was appointed by the lord, or divine service may have been performed by a chaplain attached to his retinue; but we may conclude that it was celebrated continuously, with probably the interval 1208-1214, when the realm of England and its Sovereign, King John, were placed under an Interdict by Pope Innocent III., and the clergy were forbidden to perform any portion of divine service save baptism of infants and receiving the confession of penitents. An interesting account of the ministration of the clergy and the growth of parochial institutions may be found in Dr. Cutts's work, "Parish Priests and their People in the Middle Ages," and it is through that and similar accounts that we can imagine the earlier history of our church.

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The first allusion I can find to Usk is in the "Liber Landevensis," where it is stated that the following Bull of Pope Honorius II. (1124-1130) was addressed to Urban, Bishop of Llandaff:—

"Honorius, Bishop, servant of the servants of God, to his venerable brother, Urban, Bishop of Llandaff, health and apostolical benediction. Winebald of Baeluna was disposed to give for the benefit of his soul to the monks of Montacute (note, probably Brynebiga, or the town of Usk) the territory of Caerleon. Wherefore we command thee that, saving the right of thy Church, thou wilt so far grant the said territory to the aforesaid monks.

"Given at the Lateran the 16th day of June."

The note is by the editor, the Rev. W. J. Rees, but it is probable the grant refers to Malpas rather than Usk, as there existed there afterwards a cell of Cluniac Monks, the same Order as that of Montacute; and Tanner includes the Bull amongst the records of that monastery; although the grant may possibly have included a part of Usk district.

In Sir Richard Hoare's annotations on the Itinerary of Archbishop Baldwin through Wales by Giraldus de Barri, when preaching a Crusade to the Holy Land in 1188, he says that "if we may credit William de Worcestre, Saint Elvetha, or Almedha, was buried at Usk, and the foundation of the Church must have been from a much earlier date than 1236."

Giraldus records that "at the Castle of Usk a multitude of persons, influenced by the Archbishop's sermon and the exhortations of the good and worthy William, Bishop of Llandaff, who

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faithfully accompanied us through his diocese, were signed with the cross; Alexander, Archdeacon of Bangor, acting as interpreter to the Welsh. It was remarkable that many of the most notorious murderers, thieves, and robbers of the neighbourhood were here converted, to the astonishment of the spectators."

So far our history is based on tradition and uncertain reference at the best, and it is not until the foundation of the Priory that we get any authentic record.

Dugdale, in the "Monasticon Anglicanum," records that it was in existence before 1236, and in the "Valor Ecclesiasticus," made in 1535 at the time of the Dissolution of Monasteries—26th Henry VIII.*—amongst the "deduccoes" we find the following payment:—"Itm.—Upon Sherethursday in almes to pray for the founders vizt· Sr· Richard de Clare, Sr· Gylbert his son, erles of the Marshes, Dame Elizabeth (De Burgh), Borough Countess of the Marshes, Edmond Erle of the Marshes, my Lord Richard Duke of York, l1 0 0." As Mr. Wakeman remarks, this would give but little clue, as Richard and Gilbert are common names of the Clares, but fortunately a charter of Lady Elizabeth de Burgh is still in existence, in which is recited at full length a charter of Richard de Clare, better known as Richard Strongbow, the Conqueror of Ireland, without date, but with the following attestation clause:—

"Hij sunt testes Isabella comitissa, Isabella filia ejus, Rad Bloet, Wallr Bloet, Rad de Bendevill, Rad filius ejus; Bledin fil Reginal;

* See Appendix.

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Reimund fil Willi fil Geraldi; Wiblus; Rob. Taillepetre, Geffrard Capell', Mich^e clecus, Will clecus Dat. apud Usk, decimo die Martij anno regnis Edwardi t^rtii, post, conquestum quarto."

Now as Raymond FitzWilliam FitzGerald (Raymond le Gros) was the brother-in-law of Richard Strongbow, this identifies the grantor. In this charter Strongbow confirms all the donations of his ancestors. The founders who are prayed for must have been his grandfather, Sir Richard de Clare, who was, as before-mentioned, half-brother to the Conqueror, who died 1114, and Gilbert de Tonbridge, his son, who died 1142. Possibly the nominal foundation took place in the lifetime or by bequest of the first Richard, but was not fully completed and endowed till the time of Strongbow, who succeeded in 1148, and went to Ireland in 1170, where he died seven years later. Mr. Wakeman suggests it was probably through a clerical error in the "Valor" that his name was not included in the prayers of the nuns, who seem to have been indebted to him for the greater part of their possessions.

The foundation consisted of five Benedictine Nuns and a Prioress, and the founder appears to have annexed the Parish Church and to have bestowed it with the Rectory and endowment on his protegés. Dr. Cutts tells us that the Norman lords, following the practice in France, between their thank-offerings of English benefices to their monasteries at home, and their zeal in founding monasteries on their new English estates, stripped nearly half the parishes in England of the best part of their endowments to found and enrich them.

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That the Priory of Usk came in for its share we have sufficient evidence, as in the list of Churches "antiently appropriated to Religious Houses,"* it claims Llanbadoc; Llangeview, Raglan-cum-Llandenny, Usk, alias Bryn biga, and Trostrey. To which Dugdale adds the manor and impropriate rectory and advowson of Badgeworth in Gloucestershire, and a revenue of £1 from the Chapel of Hatherlo, in the diocese of Worcester, and of tithes in Leckhampton and Shirenewton. The inventory, however, as given in Dugdale's transcript of the "Valor," from the returns 26 Hen. VIII. in the office of First Fruits, probably represents the accretion of the three-and-a-half centuries of its existence, as the "Taxatio" of Pope Nicholas, made in 1291, assesses the temporalities at £1 12s. 8d., equal in present value to about £20, whilst at the dissolution they amounted to a nett sum of £55 4s. 5½d., represented by a present value of £1,300; though probably the latter valuation includes more than what are reckoned as temporalities in the former. The items of both are set out in the appendix.

And here it may be in place to explain the origin of these valuations, which afford valuable data as to the revenues of the religious endowments at the periods they were made, and which are described by Dr. Cutts.

In the thirteenth century the Popes levied on every benefice a fine of the first year's income from every new incumbent in addition to an annual tax of one-tenth. Sometimes, with a view of reconciling the King, bestowing a portion of it for a specific purpose, and so in the

* Browne Willis' "Survey of Llandaff."

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year 1288 Pope Nicholas IV. gave the tenths to Edward I. for six years to assist in a crusade. For this purpose the King issued a precept for a new taxation, which was completed in 1291-2, and formed the basis of assessment until the next taxation, which was made in 1534 for a very different purpose.

When Henry VIII., assisted by his Parliament and Church, threw off the Papal yoke, he confiscated the property of the religious houses and the manors attached to them and the sees; but instead of relieving the Church of the burden of first-fruits and tenths imposed by Papal aggression, he appropriated the full amount to the royal revenue by Acts he compelled Parliament to pass in 1532-34, and for this purpose a new survey was made, which is known as the "Valor Ecclesiasticus."

There were chapels dedicated to S. Mary Magdalene and S. Radegund; the latter, I think, for reasons hereafter stated, may have been a separate building; also two chauntries, one dedicated either to S. Nicholas or S. Richard, was founded by John ap Jenkin ap Madoc, and the possessions were valued at £5 5s. per annum. This was afterwards granted* to Francis Morris and Francis Phelps. The endowment consisted of lands in Usk, Llantrissant, Tredunoc, and Llangibby, and a rent-charge in Sudbrook. The other, known as the service of the Holy Trinity, alias John Edward's chauntry, was valued at £5 8s. 4d., and granted to the same parties,† the endowment consisting of a barn and lands in Usk. By a grant

* 10 James I.
† *Ibid.*

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of 16 Edward II., No. 29, the patronage of the Priory and a Hospital in Usk was granted to Hugh le Despencer, who had married a daughter of Gilbert de Clare.* The site of the latter appears to be lost in the present day.

It was probably not long after the foundation of the Priory that the alteration and enlargement of the Church was commenced, perhaps in the earlier years of the thirteenth century, and this, I think, is borne out by the character of the work that remains. The north aisle was built and the arcade that divides it from the nave, which was probably rebuilt at the same time, marks the period as being that of the transitional. The arches are obtuse with plain chamfer, and devoid of mouldings, springing from circular pillars with simple bases and caps, the eastern one being relieved by four slender shafts, with apparently the set purpose of indicating a line of demarcation, possibly rendered necessary by parochial resistance to the appropriation of the Church by the Priory. To this point we shall revert when considering the inscription on the brass plate upon the screen.

Amongst the few early references is the following record:—†

"Roger Mortimer (son of Edward Mortimer, by Phillipa, daughter of Lionel, Duke of Clarence, second son of Edward III.), born at Usk on the feast of S. Guthlac, April, 1384, there baptized the following Sunday by William, Bishop of Hereford, having for godfathers Roger, Bishop of Llandaff, and Thomas Horton,

* Cart. 16, Edw. II., No. 29. Dugdale's "Mon. Anglim."
† Dugdale's "Baronage," p. 150.

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Abbot of Gloucester, and the Prioress of Usk to his godmother."

He granted the first charter to Usk, was Earl of March and Ulster, and had been declared heir-apparent to the crown by Richard II. The afore-mentioned Edmund Mortimer had taken under his protection a certain youth named Adam, and to him we are indebted for glimpses into the conventual life at Usk during the end of the fourteenth and beginning of the fifteenth centuries. It will be remembered that this was the time of the rebellion of Owen Glendwr, during the reign of Henry IV., and shortly afterwards Usk was the scene of a battle between the Prince of Wales and the rebels who had ravaged the country. It was then the charter granted by Roger was lost, being afterwards renewed and confirmed by his son. The "Chronicon Adæ de Uske, A.D. 1377-1404," has been translated and edited by Sir Edward Maunde Thompson, to whose courtesy I am indebted for permission to use the valuable information it contains. He tells us that Adam's Chronicle occupies the last twenty-two leaves of a folio volume of 176 leaves (Additional MS. No. 10,104 in the British Museum), and is intended as the continuation of the Polychronicon of Ralph Higden, which precedes it, being in a later hand of the middle, whilst Higden's is of the early part of the fifteenth century. The writer does not give his name in full, but the authorship is established by inference, which Sir Edward describes in his preface. At the foot of the first page of the Polychronicon is roughly sketched the shield of arms of Adam of Usk as emblazoned by himself —on a field sable, a naked man delving.

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Adam was born at Usk about 1360-65, and appears to have obtained, through the influence of his protector, the before-named Edmund Mortimer Earl of March, a law studentship at Oxford, where he took a doctor's degree in laws, and there we find him in 1387 an "extraordinarius of Canon law," which, however, did not prevent his joining in a serious riot which took place in the University, between the men of the South and Welsh on one side, and the Northerners on the other. He appears to have practised as a lawyer after leaving Oxford, as well as to have taken holy orders, as he was Vicar of Shirenewton and Panteg, and appointed to the Archdeaconries of Llandaff and Caermarthen. As a lawyer he was engaged in some important matters. He drew the petition for Dymock's Championship at Henry's Coronation, and was retained by Lord Grey of Ruthin in his suit against Lord Hastings; but he appears to have fallen foul of the law himself later on, as it is recorded* that Adam and his two servants, Edward Usk and Richard Edvyn, with others, "were indicted for lying wait at Westminster on the Thursday after All Saints', 1400, for one Walter Jakes, from whom they stole his horse, saddle, and bridle, valued at £5, besides fourteen marks in money." This incident he does not relate in his chronicle. He went to Rome, where, by his own account, he appears to have ingratiated himself and acquired considerable influence with Pope Boniface IX., who

* The discovery of this incident is due to the research of Mr. J. H. Wylie, and the facts appear in the pardon granted to Edward Usk, Pat. Rolls, 4 Hen. IV., ij. 22.
Chronicon Introduction, p. xxi. New Edition.

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appointed him his Chaplain and Auditor of Causes of the Sacred Palace Apostolic.

Our present concern with him is the records he left relating to his native town, and these I will transcribe verbatim from Sir Edward Thompson's translation. The chronicle was apparently intended as a supplement to Higden's work, and is an historical narrative of events which came under his own notice both at home and during his journey to and residence in Rome. The references to Usk are confined to four that have any bearing on our subject. In the first he writes:—

"In this year, that is in the year of our Lord 1400, a mighty plague prevailed throughout all England, and specially among the young, swift in its attack and sweeping away many souls. There died Lord John of Usk, Abbot of Chertsey, with twelve monks. He an inceptor in theology, and ever walking as a servant of the Blessed Virgin, gave up his soul to the Lord on the day of her Nativity, just as he had ever wished it to happen, on that feast, being born in her parish and baptized at her font in Usk!"

The next extract relating to Usk is written in the same year, viz., 1400:—

"And so blessed be God! I, already making my preparation for death, leave in my native Church, that is of Usk, my memorial in a suitable missal, grail, tropar, sequence book, and antiphonal, newly written and drawn up with new additions and notes, and in a full suit of vestments with three copes broidered with my bearings, that is, on a field sable a naked man delving; and commend myself to the suffrages of prayer offered up therein. Further, I have in

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view, if God grant it, to adorn the same Church with more worthy repair, to the glory of the Blessed Virgin; in honor of whose nativity it is dedicated; yet I do not ponder on this to mine own praise, for God forbid that this record of my foolishness should be seen in my lifetime!"

Whether or not he fulfilled his intention of more worthy repair to the Church we know not, but we find in the "Valor Ecclesiasticus," 26 Henry VIII., amongst the "deduccōes" from the revenues of the Priory at the time of the dissolution, the following:—"Item to pray for Dr. Adam and for rynging of his mind every yere 6d." See transcript from Dugdale's "Monasticon Anglicanum," which I have annexed as an appendix, as it is the fullest source of information we possess.

The next of Adam's records is dated 1401:—

"At this time certain men of the town of Usk, secretly leaving the Church during the service of the Passion of our Lord, entered by craft into the Castle, and breaking his prison, set free one John FitzPers, late seneschal therein, who, having been accused by evil report of adultery with a certain lady, had been, to all men's wonder, condemned to death by Sir Edward Charleton,* who was only her natural brother, and now lay naked undergoing punishment; and they gave him up to their great delight to the Lord Bergavenny in his Castle. Yet he was afterwards on this account exiled by the King for seduction."

A note of Sir Edward Thompson's here states that the MS. has been altered and the lady's

* He had married Alianore, daughter of Thomas Holland, Earl of Kent, King Richard's half-brother, and widow of Roger Mortimer, fourth Earl of March.

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name erased, but suspicion points to the original words being "de Usk priorissa."

The concluding reference runs thus, and is possibly inspired by the preceding incident; it is dated 1404:—

"I, the writer of this history, delivered to the Pope (Boniface IX.) the following petition:— 'Holy Father, in the Town or Borough of Usk, in the Diocese of Llandaff, is a certain most honorable Monastery of a Prioress and Convent of Nuns, who serve God with the greatest devoutness, which was of old sufficiently endowed with possessions, rents, and other incomes, and in this monastery none but virgins of noble birth were and are wont to be received; But now, owing to the burnings, thefts, and other misfortunes which have been caused by the war which raged in those parts, and otherwise, this same monastery hath come to such want that unless ready help be forthwith found by your Holiness, the Sisterhood will be forced to beg for food and clothing through the country, and to stay in the private houses of friends, whereby it is feared that scandals may in likelihood arise. And seeing that within the walls of the same monastery there is built a certain chapel in honor of S. Radegund, virgin nun, once Queen of France, whereunto the men of that country bear great reverence, and which they ofttimes, and specially at the Feasts of Easter and Whitsuntide, are wont to visit, now therefore prayeth your Holiness your faithful Chaplain and Auditor of Causes of the Sacred Palace Apostolic, who first drew breath in the same town or borough, and of whose blood are some of the same sisterhood, that having pity with fatherly

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compassion on that Monastery, and Prioress, and Nuns, you will deign graciously to grant to all Christian people who so often as, on the second days of the said festivals, for all time to come, they shall visit the same chapel, shall stretch forth the hand of help thereto, some indulgence, as your Holiness shall think fit, with necessary and proper clauses as in form.' And the Pope signed it thus:—'So be it as is asked, for five years and as many Lents as appeareth in the same Chapel.'"

In the transcript of Returns, 26 Henry VIII., in the office of First Fruits,* we find —"Itm for offeringˢ in Radegunds Chappell ˢ.1 8ᵈ." and may certainly conclude that the Chapel was a separate building within the walls of the Monastery as stated by Adam. There are at present in the grounds of the Priory fragments of shafts, bases, capitals, and other remains indicating an entirely different style of architecture to that of the Church, and these may possibly have formed part of the Chapel in question.

In the "Archæologia Cambrensis," Series I., Vol. II., p. 35, there appeared a copy of the inscription upon the brass plate in the Church, which has been, as there stated, a "vexata questio" among the antiquaries of Monmouthshire for more than a century. It had been figured in the "Archæologia" as well as in Coxe's "Monmouthshire," but in both cases inaccurately, but the copy accompanying the article was carefully reduced from a rubbing and engraved by Mr. G. A. Hanton, of Rathgar. Subjoined to the article are the interpretations of

* See Appendix.

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three contributors, the first, and by far the most important, being that of Mr. Wakeman. I do not propose to deal with the different versions that are set forth, but for the purpose of this narrative to assume that Mr. Wakeman's is the most probable solution. On looking through his unpublished manuscripts I find a much more detailed account than appears in the article as published. He complains that the editor had curtailed his observations and reduced the facsimile copy of the inscription, thus rendering it less intelligible, in addition to making several typographical errors which he had no opportunity of correcting.

He writes as follows:—"The inscription is on a narrow strip of brass, and was perhaps never very highly polished at the first, and being, moreover, a good deal corroded by time and neglect, and cracked, a mere hastily made rubbing will not shew the whole of the letters as perfectly as could be wished. Coxe has given several versions, all evidently from incorrect copies. The inscription having been set up in a Church, it is assumed to be a sepulchral memorial of some very learned man, whose name, however, in all the versions but one is unaccountably omitted." He says:—"I suspect that none of Coxe's correspondents ever saw the original, but assumed its sepulchral character without enquiry into what part of the Church it was situated, and the possibility of its being anything else. I was of the same opinion until I obtained a correct copy and made a translation, which led me to the conclusion that it was not set up in memory of Adam Gwent, but as a grateful record of a transaction in which he was

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a prominent actor, and as a mark or limit of the extent of certain privileges or property in the Church."

He then describes the situation in which it was found, and states that neither history nor tradition assign to it any other.

"The church was an appropriate rectory to the adjoining convent of Benedictine Nuns, and must have been from its foundation the parish church, as no other existed in the town. The chancel, of course, belonged to the nuns, the nave to the parish. To separate these a carved screen was carried across the church, cutting off a portion of the north aisle, which was also divided from the choir by a branch screen of the same design and era. This last has been removed in recent alterations (he writes in 1847). On the base of the main screen, near the angle formed by its junction with the branch, was fixed the plate and inscription. . . . It certainly always appeared to be a very odd place in which to find a sepulchral inscription. The writing is in that bold square character in use in the time of Henry III., every letter distinct and well formed; the use of the K, U, and W shews it not to be of earlier date than the thirteenth century."

I will not attempt to follow the masterly essay on the interpretation of the inscription, which will be found in the volume of the "Archæologia Cambrensis" referred to, but only give the English equivalent, which runs thus:—

"This screen's intention is the legal decision of the gifts to the Superior (*i.e.*, the Prioress). She (the Prioress) will again keep a cheerful house of fair appearance. Lo, Adam is a

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Solomon in intellect, and resides at Usk, and (he is) Judge as far as the liberties of the manors of Tŷ navaro Tŷ Havabe. Fairly did the eloquent sage settle the dispute."

The concluding sentence, he remarks, he will leave to others, but it appears to be a hyperbolical compliment introduced as a final flourish to fill up the space.

I will here remark that the junction of the screens took place at the most eastern pillar of the arcade, which, as before noticed, is distinguished from the others by four slender shafts.

Mr. Wakeman identifies the sage as Adam ap Jorwerth ap Cradoc, known as Adam of Gwent, who was at that time steward of the manors belonging to the Clare family in the County of Monmouth; but as I cannot find in any of his MSS. that he makes any allusion to the Chronicle of Adam of Uske, which had not at the time he wrote been rescued from comparative obscurity, I infer he could not have known of it, or would in all probability have ascribed the commemoration to him, as I certainly think there is every reason to believe is intended, and there is absolutely nothing to lead us to conclude that the two Adams were identical.

Since writing the foregoing pages I have received from Sir Edward Thompson a copy of a new edition of his translation of "Chronicon Adæ de Usk," by which it appears that the missing pages, numbering twelve, were discovered in the year 1885 amongst the Duke of Rutland's collection at Belvoir Castle, and that in them Adam's narrative is carried on to the year 1421. No further allusion to the Church or Priory, however, occurs, but in the introduction a most

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interesting biography of Adam is given, and what is most to our purpose, a transcript of his will,* in which legacies are made to the Parish Church, to the Vicar of Usk, and to each of the nuns, with a request that he should be buried in the Church before the image of the Blessed Virgin Mary. This was complied with, and Sir Edward favours the theory that the inscription on the brass plate formed a portion of his epitaph in accordance with Professor Rhys' rendering of the translation; this is, however, so wrapped in obscurity, that there may well exist differences of opinion. It appears evident, I think, that Adam is the person referred to, whether during his life or after his death.

Of the buildings belonging to the Priory we have no record, but they must have been extensive to judge by the quantity of stone, evidently the remains of buildings that have been destroyed. Nothing remains but the part that was converted into a dwelling-house and the fine gate house with its circular-headed arches and postern gate. They must have included, in addition to the monastic dwelling, and possibly a chapel, farm buildings and barns for the reception of tithes, which were no doubt paid in kind.

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* So much as relates to our subject is as follows:—

"In Dei nomine amen. Vicesimo die mensis Januarii anno Dómini millesimo cccc^mo vicesimo nono, ego Adam Usk, legum doctor, compos et sanus memorie, timens mortis periculum michi evenire condo testamentum meum in hunc modum: In primis lego aminam meam Deo, et beate Marie virgini, ac omnibus sanctis ejus; corpusque meum ad sepeliendum in ecclesia parochiali de Usk, coram ymagine beate Marie virginis."

"Item, lego ecclesie parochiali predicte unum librum appellatum 'Racionale divinorum.' Item, lego domino Johanni vicario de Usk, iijs. iiijd. Item, lego cuilibet moniali prioratus de Usk, xxd."

The Will was proved on 26th March, 1430.

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I can find no further reference to the Priory until its dissolution in 1535, when the "Valor Ecclesiasticus"* before mentioned gives us a full account of its possessions and liabilities, and it is most interesting, especially to those who know Usk under its present aspect, to note how in all the records relating to the district the old place names are retained to the present day, such as Prioress Mill, Prior's Wood, Penkerig, Cockshute, and many others.

The Prioress and Nuns appear to have acknowledged the King's supremacy, as the official document is preserved in the Chapter House at Westminster,† and to it is attached an impression of the conventual seal, which represents the Virgin Mary seated on an ornamented chair between two pilasters, the Infant Jesus taking the breast in her lap. Above are a crescent and a star, the legend being:—"S sce Marie et Conventus de Uske."

Coxe relates that at the date of his visit, about 1800, in an apartment of the first floor of the Priory the frieze of the ceiling was decorated with thirty emblematical devices and emblazoned arms—the coats of benefactors to the Priory, or more probably to the Benedictine order.

This frieze, or the portion which remained, as only twenty-four shields now appear, was removed about 1860 to Cefntilla Court, the residence of Lord Raglan, together with a large quantity of very beautiful oak panelling, where it now remains. It has, however, been reproduced, and a copy is in one of the rooms of the Priory.

* See Appendix.
† 25 Hen. VIII. Dugdale's "Mon. Ang."

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The following is a description of the design, which is a good example of the cinquecento style, and was probably put up before the question of Henry's marriage to Catherine of Arragon was agitated, in the earlier years of his reign:—

1.—The Royal Arms. From the supporters, a dragon and a greyhound, it must have been borne early in the reign of Henry VIII., as he changed them to a lion and a dragon after a short time.

2.—Badge, probably used by Henry VII. or VIII.—the Tudor Rose crowned.

3.—Badge of Catherine of Arragon—the Pomegranate crowned.

4.—Rose—either York or Lancaster.

5.—Probably intended for a lion rampant, the Shield of Josceline de Louvaine, a son of the reigning sovereign of Brabant, who married in the reign of Henry II. the daughter and heiress of the Percys upon condition of his changing either his name or arms. He relinquished his name but retained his arms, which have been ever since borne by the Percys.*

6.—*Fleur de lys*.—Royal badge, either Henry VII. or VIII.

7.—Head of a priest.

8.—An eagle with two heads (this is stated by Mr. Wakeman to be the arms of Bluet of Langstone,† and is thus given as borne by the family of the same name in Hampshire), Or an eagle displ. with two necks.

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* Montagu's "Guide to Heraldry."

† Sir James Berkeley, younger brother of Thomas Baron Berkeley, married Elizabeth, daughter of Sir John Bloet, with whom he had the Town and Castle of Raglan.

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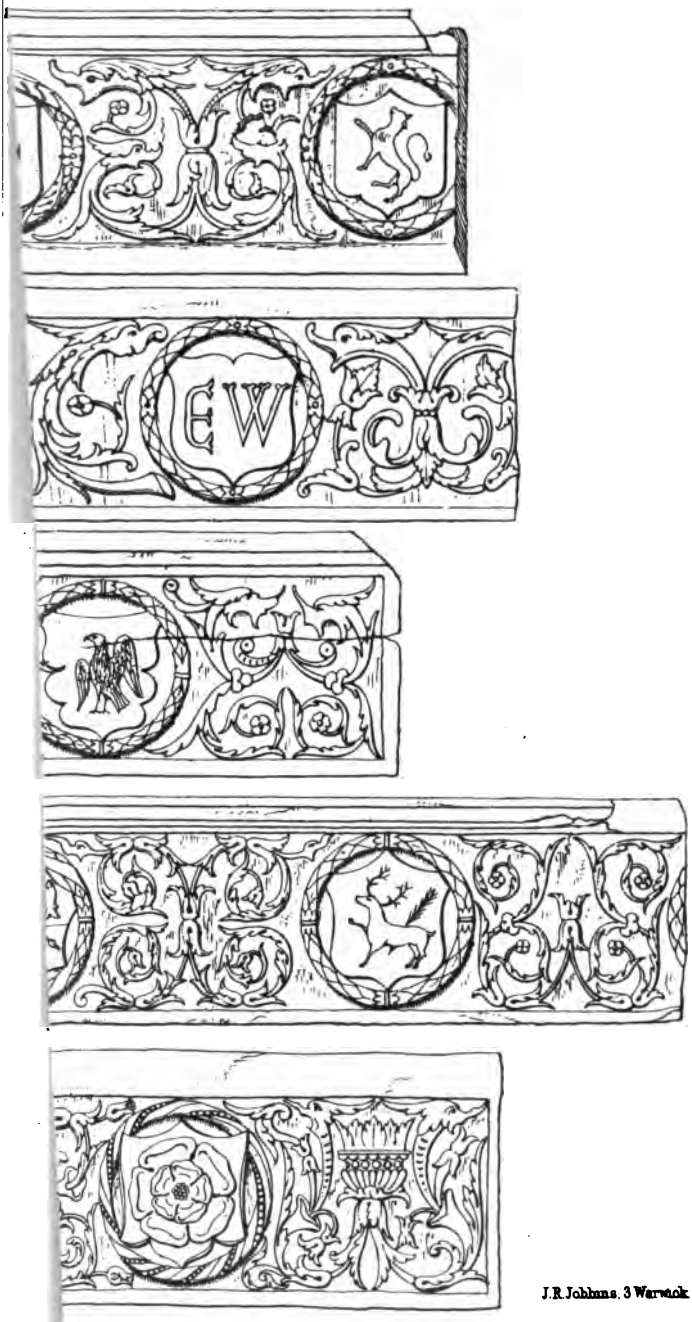

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9.—A head, probably of a monk.

10.—E.W.—Initials of the last Prioress who held the office in 1535.* Note by Mr. Wakeman—"The late Prioress, Dame Johan Harryman, seems to have been living in 1535, and to have had a pension of £7, claimed in the allowances, but struck out. If E. W. stands for Ellen Williams, she could not have been in office many years in 1535, but a former Prioress may have had the same initials."

11.—I.H.S.—the sacred monogram.

12.—Emblems of the Passion—the ladder, scourge, and hyssop.

13.—A curious head, with what looks like a dice on the same shield.

14.—An eagle rising. This was borne as a second crest by Edward II., but there is nothing to identify this, as it is largely used in heraldry.

15.—Great difference of opinion exists as to this shield, which bears three fish intertwined, surrounded by a circle. It may either be taken as an emblem of the Trinity as found with other emblems in the Catacombs at Rome, or, as I think more probable, the cognizance of the Troutbecks, thus described in "Moule's Heraldry of Fish":—

"Their arms yet existing amongst those of numerous benefactors in the Cloisters of Canterbury Cathedral in the reign of Henry IV., exhibit a tasteful method of disposing the fish as an heraldic charge—Azure, three trout fretted *tête à la queue argent.*" Burke's "General Armoury" gives the arms of this family:—"Ar. three trout fretted in triangle, *tête à-la-guise ar.*"

* Ellen Williams was Prioress in 1535. MS. Cole Brit. Mus., Vol. XXVI., p. 216. Dugdale's "Mon. Angl."

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The same variation of disposal also occurs in the arms of Lucy on the standards surmounting the pinnacles of the gables at Charlecote, where the three luces are interlaced between cross crosslets.

16.—Head.

17.—The arms of Clare, founders of the Priory.

18.—The arms of Percy. Henry, seventh Lord Percy, married as second wife Matilda, sister of Anthony, Lord Lucy, and quartered the Lucy arms, the lions rampant, from Josceline de Louvaine, as before noticed.

19.—Stag pierced by an arrow. I can find no clue to this device.

20.—Three *fleurs de lys*. A royal device, originally adopted by Louis VII., King of France, 1137. In 1275 Edmund, Earl of Lancaster, second son of Henry III., married Blanche of Artois, and first adopted this device on an English shield, since when it has appeared in some form on the Royal Arms until 1801, when it was removed.*

21.—Portcullis badge of the House of Beaufort, and a favourite device of Henry VII.

22.—Probably the Red Rose of Lancaster.

23.—The White Rose of York, or it is possible that as there appear double petals they represent the Union Rose, the inner being white and the outer red.

We have now reached the end of the history of the Priory as a religious house, and will trace its various endowments after their confiscation, and I must again acknowledge my indebtedness

* Boutell's "English Heraldry."

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to Mr. Wakeman for a large portion of the information.

In 36 Henry VIII., the site of the Priory and various lands particularly described were granted to Roger Williams,* grandfather of Sir Trevor Williams.† We are not told the price he paid for these confiscated lands, but it would appear as if, either the royal robber was anxious to get rid as soon as possible of his ill-gotten acquisition, or the said Roger had bribed the Auditor, Edward Gostwyk, appointed to value the lands, as he remarks in his certificate:—"Who wold purches the pmysses the Audytor knoweth not, but onlly this bringer." The yearly value was assessed at £8 4s. 7d.

"Lands called Ynys yearll in Llangwm, parcel of the possessions of the Priory, were granted to James Guntes and William Lewis."‡

"On the 3rd March, 1549, Thomas Marsh petitioned to purchase the Rectories of Llanbadoc, Usk, Kilgoygan and Llangevwy tithes, etc. 10th April, 1549, Thomas Marsh and Roger Williams had a grant of the Rectories, Churches, and Chapels of Llanbadoc, Kilgoygan, and Llangevyw, and the Chapels of S. Radegund and S. Mary Magdalene, and all tithes, etc., and the advowsons and presentations."§

"William, Earl of Pembroke, and William Clerke had a grant of the Manor of Usk Priory, Shirenewton, Llanllowel, Llanddewi, Llangibby, the Rectory of Trostrey, the Chapel and Rectory

* Pat. 36, Henry VIII. See Appendix.
† Dugdale's Mon. Ang.
‡ Pat. 37, Henry VIII.
§ Pat. 3, Edward VI.

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of Llandenny, the Tithes and Glebe lands in Usk, Llanbadoc, Llangevyw, Llantrissant, Trostrey, Llandenny, etc. The Earl and Clerke immediately obtained the King's licence to convey the Manor to Roger Williams. The immediate object sought to be obtained by such renewed grants of the same property is not always obvious without reference to private deeds. Sometimes there seemed to have been a lurking suspicion that the title to these Church lands was rather precarious; in other instances it seems to have been done to facilitate private arrangements. The Earl of Pembroke had obtained extensive grants of lands; some of these he exchanged with the Crown and with private individuals, and this grant to him is involved in a transaction of this nature."*

"On 1st August, Sir Christopher Hatton obtained a grant of lands and tenements in Llanbadock, and all the Tithes whatsoever belonging to the Church of Gilgoegan, alias Kilgoygan, parcel of the land exchanged by William, late Earl of Pembroke, with our most dear brother, Edward, late King, etc."†

"In 1611 the Rectory and Tithes of Trostrey were granted to Antonio Gooch and William Clerke."

"The great Tithes of Raglan and all other Tithes there, and a fishery in the Usk, late parcel of the possessions of Usk Priory, were granted to Francis Morrice and Francis Phelps."‡

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* Pat. 7 Edward VI.
† 24 Elizabeth, 1582.
‡ Pat. 10 James I.

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"The following year Charles Williams, Esq., of Llangibby, took a fresh grant of the Manor of Usk Priory, described as in the Parishes of Usk, Llanbadoc, Llangeview, Trostrey, Llangwm, Shirenewton, Llanllowel, Llandenny, Llangibby, and Llantrissant, and the Chapel, tithes and glebe lands of Llandenny."*

"Roger Williams, of Usk, ancestor of the family of Llangibby and grantee in Patent, 1549, soon afterwards conveyed the site of the Priory, and a close of eight acres adjoining; a pasture in Llanbadoc called Pencarreck, containing eight acres; twenty acres of land called Tyre-y-Clova and Kaye Adamas in Usk; and forty acres called Cock-y-shute, also in Usk; to his brother-in-law, William John ap Jevan, by licence of the King, Henry VIII."

"In Easter Term, 1 and 2 Phil. and Mary, Elizabeth, widow of William John ap Jevan, being called upon to shew her title to the premises upon inquisition held, the above grant from Roger Williams was set forth, and also a settlement of the premises by her husband, dated 24th April, 6th Edward VI., to the use of his wife for life, reversion to Thomas Johns and Roger Johns, their sons, and their issue in succession, remainder to the next heirs of the bodies of the said William and Elizabeth, and failing all these to Walter Williams, a natural son of the said William John ap Jevan, and the heirs of his body, and in default to Walter William David, one of the sons of William David, late deceased,

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* Pat. 11 James I.

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and finally to the right heirs of the said William John ap Jevan." *

"This William John ap Jevan appears to have been an attorney, and married Elizabeth, sister of Roger Williams. He was living in 1554, and died in that or early in the following year. His eldest son married Dorothy, daughter of William Herbert of Colebrook, and had issue Hugh and (?) Walter."

"Hugh Jones, of the Priory, married Elizabeth, daughter of ———, and was the father, I believe, of William Jones, of the Priory, and Elizabeth, who married Edward Bennet, of Cilfeugan. William Jones died before 1670, when his widow, Mary, daughter of ———, was living at the Priory. Issue, Christopher and William, both living in 1680."

"Christopher Jones married ———, and had issue William, John, and Edward. William Jones married and had issue Mary, who died unmarried in 1751, and Elizabeth, who married Samuel Stocke, a merchant in London, and died in 1751, leaving an only son, Richard, an infant, who died in 1767, aged 16."

"John Jones, second son of Christopher, married ———, daughter of ———, and was the father of John Noyes Jones, who, by ———, daughter of ———, left an only daughter, Eleanor Jones, who died unmarried at Bath in 1810."

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* In the Lord Treasurer's Remembrancer's Office in the Exchequer, the following record is to be found:—

"Uske de Elizea. John ap Jevan Vidua, occasionat ad ostendendum quo titulo tenet Domum et situm Prioratus de Uske et alias terras in comitatû Monmouth." Phil. et Mar., Rot. 8.

Dugdale's "Mon. Ang."

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"Edward Jones, the third son of Christopher, married ———, daughter of ———, and had issue Edward Jones, who died in 1814, leaving issue the Rev. Edward Jones, of ———, in Northamptonshire, living in 1848. His son, the Rev. Edward Jones, Rector of Shirenewton, is the present representative of the family. The Priory, however, was sold a few years ago to His Grace the Duke of Beaufort."

It remained in his possession till 1865, when it was purchased by Mr. Thomas Watkins, by whom it was sold in 1888 to the writer.

The Manor of Usk Priory still continues in the family of Williams of Llangibby, and now belongs to Albert Addams-Williams, Esq.

The Church was evidently altered and embellished during the fifteenth or early in the sixteenth century, and to this date may be ascribed the upper storey of the tower, with the battlements and crocketed pinnacles, which are shewn in the engraving by Sir Richard Hoare, which appears in his "Giraldus Cambrensis," as well as in Coxe's "Monmouthshire." The beautiful traceried windows were probably then introduced, as well as the north and west porches with their delicate carving and groined roofs. The north porch bears over the doorway a shield with the Herbert badge,* which Mr. Wakeman suggests was due to its erection by one of the Herberts when Steward or Constable, certainly not later than the grant to Sir William Herbert in 1550. In the west porch is a fine stoup for holy water, and stone benches, the latter also appear in the north porch, but evidently as a

* I am unable to find any record of the badge in question being used by the Herbert family.

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later addition, as the angle shafts run through them. Both porches carried crocketed pinnacles, all of which have been destroyed.

At the dissolution, the Church appears to have been successfully claimed by the parishioners, although in all probability its possessions shared the fate of the conventual endowments, either then or under the Commissioners appointed by Edward VI. The parishioners were unable, apparently, to maintain the Church they had acquired, but whether the destruction of the chancel and transepts was of set purpose at this time or the effects of unhindered decay, we know not. We are told that there were in 1548, 350 "houseling people," or communicants, in the parish of Usk.*

There seems to be no record of anything connected with the Church from this time onwards with the exception of a return made by Bishop Anthony Kitchen to Archbishop Parker, dated January 20th, 1560, from his Manor of Matherne, in which appears:—"William Johns Vicare of Uske in the said Dioces is there resydent and kepeth hospitalytye." As the Bishop in his introductory letter professes to distinguish "all such as are lerned and able to preche," this gentleman does not appear to have possessed that qualification; indeed there were only two who were "able and lycenced to preache" in the Deanery of Usk. I may here remark, with regret, that the parish chest contains little relating to the history of the Church.

In 1679, Charles Baker, a Roman Catholic Priest of the Order of the Society of Jesus, was

* Newall's "Dioc. Hist. Llandaff."

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indicted for high treason, his alleged offence being that he had received orders in the Roman Church, and being a priest remaining in England, contrary to the Statute; an endeavour was also made to implicate him in some of the plots to restore the Catholic succession to the throne, but apparently with but little foundation. He was tried at Monmouth on March 29th, 1679, and condemned to death. On the 27th August he was drawn on a hurdle from Usk Prison, then situated in Bridge Street, to a spot which is assigned by tradition to the site where Porthycarne House now stands, and there barbarously executed. His remains were buried close to the west porch of the Church, the stone over his grave, with the words "Popish Recusant," being visible until the year 1830.

In process of time, though the date is unrecorded, the nave and north aisle appear to have been closed in by a masonry screen, blocking the western arch of the tower, in front of which the communion table was placed, the pulpit being against the shafted pillar before noticed, a portion of the arch of the arcade being cut out to make room for a sound-board above it. A gallery extended along the north side of the aisle. The crossing under the tower remained open, and I am told that at one time it formed a shelter for cattle. A school-house was erected on the site of the north transept, where the vestry now stands, and remained there until 1830, and a bone-house stood at the west end of the Church about midway between that and the Priory gate-house. This building, as well as the school-house, appears in Sir Richard Hoare's illustrations before alluded to.

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In 1844 a scheme for alterations was carried out. The nave was lengthened to provide accommodation lost by the removal of the north gallery, the wall blocking the western arch of the tower was removed and replaced by one filling the eastern arch, by which the space beneath the tower was adapted as a chancel, which was covered with a groined roof with four massive ribs supported on corbels.

In a paper read by my friend, Mr. Stephen Williams, before the Cambrian Archæological Society, he appears, curiously enough, to have been deceived by this work, giving it credit for being original Norman, and in his illustration to his notes delineated it as such. In the recent restoration, however, it was found to be modern brickwork covered with cement, probably placed there when the space was brought into the Church. In the original Norman work no doubt the crossing was open to the lantern windows in the lower stage of the tower.

The roof of the nave and north aisle, originally of open timber, was ceiled with lath and plaster, and the whole of the interior, including walls, arches, and pillars, covered up with a thick coat of cement, which was from time to time refreshed with whitewash.

The addition to the nave is, I think, to be regretted, as the design is incongruous and, I venture to think, debased. The pavement appears to have been broken up, and the memorial slabs displaced. The roof was re-covered with slates, which replaced the old stone tiles. The organ was placed in a gallery in the new addition, and it was not until 1875 that it was moved to the north-east bay of the north aisle.

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The beautiful north and west porches, at some date, I think, however, earlier than this, were cleverly repaired with cement and carefully covered up with whitewash, both inside and out, much to the detriment of the delicate carving in the parapets, ribs, and bosses, the south face of the west porch being destroyed to make way for an unsightly angle stair to the organ gallery.

In 1899 the acquisition of the organ then in Llandaff Cathedral, which the Chapter were replacing by a more powerful instrument, gave the opportunity for commencing what we trust will prove a restoration of the Church to its pristine beauty. The Committee which was formed to carry it out commissioned Mr. G. E. Halliday, of Llandaff, who has shewn that he interprets correctly the true meaning of restoration, for as far as it has been possible, the original has been studied in each detail where examination has disclosed it.

It was not found practicable to restore the open timber roof—in fact, but little of the original remained—but the alternative of leaving it intact and replacing the plaster ceiling with an oak barrel roof with moulded ribs, was deemed advisable. The cement facing was removed, and as no traces of original plaster appeared, the masonry was carefully pointed, the ashlar being cleansed from the accumulated whitewash; in doing so a door to a former rood-loft from the stair in the angle turret was disclosed. This could apparently only have been used before the erection of the north aisle, and the loft probably crossed the Church on the western side of the west arch of the tower. Also a door was opened which formerly led from the north transept to

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the aisle. The lintel marking the site of a door under the middle south window was discovered, which no doubt was the access to the Church from the Priory. In displacing the old pews to fix the choir stalls, a monumental slab was found underneath, which was removed to a suitable position on the western wall of the aisle. It bears the following quaint inscription:—

WATTER IONES. I DOE HIM
PRAYSE A VALIANT SOVLDIOVR
IN HIS DAYS VNTO THE WARS
WOVLD HE GOE TO FIGHTAGA
INST HIS FORRAINE FOE TO
ADVANCE A PIKE BEFORE HIS QVEENE
THE WHICH ELISABETH HAVE
SEEN HIS SWORD AND SPEARE
HE DID ADVAᵛNCE AND THEN HE
TOOK HIS WAY TO FRAVNCE AND
LANDED IN THE ILE OFREE
WHERE HIS DESIRE WAS TO BEE
AND TO THE LORD HE GAVE THE
PRAYSE THAT HE CAME HOME TO
END HIS DAYES AND WHILST I IN MY
GRAVE DO SLEEPE I PRAYE THE
LORD MY SOVLE TO KEEPE.
WATTER IONES DECEASED THE
14TH DAY OF FEBRUARY 1656.

The letter N and figure 4 are cut backwards, and the inscription is surrounded by a

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geometric design and a representation of a sword and pike. The Isle of Ree alluded to is on the west coast of France, where English troops were landed to assist the persecuted Huguenots.

Three of the windows in the nave and aisle were reglazed, also the large western window of the aisle, which was in a dilapidated and dangerous condition, was restored and re-glazed, the following armorial bearings in their proper colours being inserted. Viewed from the outside the upper row represents:—

1.—The Royal Arms, *temp.* Hen. VIII.
2.—Troutbeck.
3.—See of Llandaff (present Bishop).
4.—*Fleur de lys*—Tudor badge.
5.—Percy.

Lower row:—

1.—Josceline de Louvaine.
2.—Clare.—Earls of Gloucester and Lords of Usk, founders of the Priory.
3.—Town of Usk.
4.—Somerset or Beaufort.
5.—The Pomegranate badge of Queen Katherine of Arragon.

With the exception of those of the See of Llandaff and the town of Usk, the arms were taken from the frieze in the Priory before alluded to, and were probably borne by benefactors to the Benedictine order.

Perhaps the greatest gain by the removal of the cement covering was the disclosure of the massive Norman piers and arches of the tower crossing, the only portion of the interior, with the exception of the stair turret, that has survived of the original Norman Church, and which,

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apart from the carved string-course which has been ruthlessly mutilated, is marvellously preserved. The material is a coarse-grained oolite, alternated in places with a red sandstone, the bases as before noticed being concealed some fifteen inches below the existing pavement.

The portion of the beautiful screen, probably dating from the fifteenth century, which extends across the nave, was privately restored. On examination it was found to be in such an insecure condition, that the whole structure would probably very shortly have collapsed. It has been secured for, it is hoped, many years by an iron girder and tie-rods, though it was not found possible to restore it to a perpendicular position. An accumulation of paint and varnish was carefully removed, revealing that it had at one time been painted bright blue, and subsequently to imitate oak. The rosettes and foliage which adorned the junction of the ribs of the cove had been nearly all destroyed, but fortunately patterns of each were intact, which enabled the carver to reproduce them. There was originally a traceried parapet, somewhat similar to that on the Llangwm screen, the rail of which had been utilized as a cill, into which the uprights are fixed, and in which were discovered mortise-holes corresponding to those in the beam forming the top of the screen. When cleansed the whole of the woodwork was found to have been decorated, and remains of the gilding and colour were discovered sufficiently distinct to enable the scheme of colour to be accurately restored, and with the exception of the upper parapet, and probably the rood and figures, the screen now stands as it did at the time of its erection. The celebrated

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brass plate is now fixed on the eastern transome of first south bay. The work of restoration was carried out by Mr. Clarke, of Llandaff, under Mr. Halliday's direction.

The Church Plate is fully described in Mr. Halliday's valuable work, "Llandaff Church Plate." It consists of a bell-shaped chalice, date 1697, inscribed "William Williams and Walter Phillips, Churchwardens"; a paten, hall-marked, date letter probably 1704, with the following inscription on the underside:—

"Elenor Dow, the widow of William Jefferies, born in this parish, died November 4th, 1727, in the parish of Kensington, in the county of Middlesex, aged between 70 and 80, did by her last will give five pounds towards re-building the Parish Church of Usk, in Monmouthshire, which, being in good order, we applied the money to this Salver and the scarlet Communion Table Cloth.

"Da Pryse, Vicar.
"Walter Churley, T. Stephens, Churchwardens."

The Registers of Baptisms, Marriages, and Deaths, are comparatively modern, nothing being recorded before 1742.

The Church possesses a unique oak chest, bound with iron, and with six locks, but it is to be regretted that it is in a dilapidated condition from want of preservation; it probably dates from the sixteenth century.

When the work of restoration is resumed, the tower should first claim attention, and a thorough inspection and report is most necessary. Without this it is impossible to forecast the necessary repairs, but it certainly requires pointing throughout. Unless the battlements and

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pinnacles are restored, which is much to be desired, the coping should be brought to a level by the removal of the objectionable brickwork, and this would in all probability be a return to the design of the original Norman tower. The porches also need careful repair. The exterior of the northern one has been already cleansed from the moss and effect of damp and colour with which it was encrusted, and it reveals how skilled and careful work might restore the delicate carving with which it is enriched. The crocketed pinnacles on both porches are gone, but sufficient guide remains to accurately restore them. One of the fine gargoyles of the west porch has been removed, but as its present possessor is known, it would doubtless be restored if requested. The interior vaulting, with ribs and carved bosses, is in good preservation and require only careful cleansing. It is most necessary that a proper channel should be constructed on the north and west sides of the Church and around the porches to dry the foundations, and this would do much to preserve the walls and pavements of the Church.

The re-building of the choir and transepts is, I fear, almost hopeless to contemplate; pending this much is left to be done in the interior. The unsuitable east window should be replaced by triple lancets, which, if filled with stained glass, might find a place if it was ever found practicable to carry out the restoration of the choir. The nave roof remains incomplete, as funds did not admit of adding the bosses at the junction of the ribs, and the decoration designed by Mr. Halliday for that portion east of the screen, which requires three additional hammer beams to complete it.

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The screen crossing the north aisle should undergo the same process as was adopted with the nave portion, though it appears to be structurally sounder, and the repair would not be so costly. The present pulpit is a survival of a bygone age, when "three deckers" were in use, and might well be replaced by a more sightly structure; and certainly not the least important addition is a proper system of heating, required both for the comfort of worshippers within its walls as well as for the preservation of the fabric itself.

An effort such as has already been made with such good results would prove our value for the Sacred House in which our forefathers have continuously worshipped God for eight hundred years, and which it should be our pride to hand down to posterity restored and beautified for its holy purpose.

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APPENDIX.

THE Temporalities of this Priory are thus valued in Pope Nicholas's Taxation, A.D. 1291 :—

"Priorissa de Uska habet viginti quatuor acras terra qui valent per annum 8s.

De annuo redditu 6s. 8d.

De molendinum ibidem 10s.

De perquisitas cur. 5s.

Item. idem habet apud Shirenewt de redd assis 3s.

Summa 1l 12s. 8d.

(Taxat. Eccles. P. Nich. IV., p. 283.)

Cœnobium Monialium de Uske in Agro Monemutensis.

Num. I.

Valor Ecclesiasticus *temp.* Hen. VIII.

(Transcript of Return. 26 Hen. VIII., First Fruits Office.)

The Piory of Uske.

Pryoress ther Damp' Elen William.

The true Rekenyng of all the Rents of Assize, Demeane Landⁿ, Tythingⁿ, oblacons, offrings, and of all other Comodities Issues and Pffites on yere with an othre belonging or appertayning to the Monastorye or Pryorye of Uske, &c.

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Reddit' Ass'.

In primis the rents of assise in the Lordeship of Uske, as apperith by the Rentall amounteth yerely to the sume of	16	16	3½

Reddit' Ter Dñical'.

Itm for the rent of a Pasture called Pencarrcke	3	6	8
Itm for the rent of a mede called the Priores Mede	2	13	4
Itm for the lytill mede	0	4	0
Itm for the Orcherde adjoyning to the pryorye	0	10	0
Sma reddit' assu' et reddit' terr' dñical ...	23	10	3½

Tythyng, Corne, Hey, Apples, Fysshe, oblacons, offring, Crysomes, &c.

In primis for the Tythyng Corne comyng to the Tythyng Barn of Usk from Llanbadoke, Uske, and Langevyew, valet per annu' ...	13	0	0
Itm for the tythyng corne of Raglan	5	0	0
Itm for the pffitts comyng out of the chapell of Landenny	2	0	0
Itm for the tything corn of Glaskoyd	0	16	8
Itm for the tything hey of Uske and Langeview	2	6	8
Itm for the nynth fyshe in the ryv.' of Uske	2	0	0
Itm for the tything Appels, pere and nottes...	0	1	8
Itm for offrings in Saint Radegands Chappell	0	1	8
Itm for offrings to ymages in the pishe. Churche of Uske	0	1	2

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Itm̃ for offrings in Marye Magdalen is Chappell	0	1	3
Itm̃ for Crysomes	0	3	4
Itm̃ for a pygyn howse	0	1	4
Itm̃ for tything in Stevarney	0	5	4
Sm̃a	25	19	5
Reddit' Assis' de Badgeworth, Hadderly, et Down Hadderly in Com' Gloucestr'.			
In primis the rents of assise there as appereth by the rentall, amounteth to the sume of ...	1	13	4
Sm̃a	1	13	4
Itm for all man' tything, issues oblacons and pfitts comyng out of the pishe churches of Badgeworth, Hadderly, and a Chappell thereto annexed in the countie of Glocr amounteth to the sume yerely of	18	6	8
Sm̃a	18	6	8
Sm̃a tol valor'	69	9	8½

Deduccoes.

First to Mastre Charles Herbert, styward of the said priorie for his fee	2	0	0
Itm̃ to Mastre George Tailor Auditor of the said priorie	2	0	0
Itm̃ to Philip Ltn ap Morgan baily there for his fee, mete, and drynke and lyvay ...	3	6	8
Itm̃ to the Busshop and Archdeachon for pxies. and synages	2	15	8

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Itm̃ upon Sherethursday in almes to pray for the founders, viz. S^{r} Richard de Clare, S^{r} Gylbert his sone, erles of the Marches, Dame Elizabeth Borowgh Counties of the Marches, Edmond Erle of the Marches, my Lord Richard Duke of Yorke	1	0	0
Itm̃ to Damp' Johan Haryman late priores of Uske, for her penc̃on in money 4^{l} 13$^{s.}$ 4$^{d.}$ and for her mete and drynke 2^{l} 6$^{s.}$ 8$^{d.}$ ...	7	0	0
Itm̃ to pray for D$^{r.}$ Adam and for rynging of his mynd evy yere	0	0	6
Itm̃ one S^{r} Philip Ivon dydd geve to the said pryorye a cotage and 2 gardens to fynde a preste to pray for his sowle in the pishe church of Uske who has yerely of the said pryorie for the rent thereof	1	0	0
Itm̃ paid yerely to the quene is officers for out rents for certain gardens in the Toune of Uske	0	2	1
Itm̃ for tallege	0	0	4
Nota p. Stipendis Capellam̃	2	0	0
Sm̃^{a} deduc̃oes	14	5	3
Et sic rem' de clar' ...	55	4	5½
Decima inde	5	10	5½

Memorand' that Richard Duke of Yorke dydd give toward the foundac̃on of the said priorye, to maynteyn waxe and oyle in the same yerely	2	0	8½
Itm̃ the said Duke dydd geve a gardeyn in like man' to fynde waxe and oyle	0	1	0
Itm̃ in lyke man' the Lady Elizabz de Clare dydd geve toward the foundacon of the said pryorye, to mayntayne waxe and oyle, rent in Sherenewton, viz.	0	3	4

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Itm̃ in like manr Sr Hugh David Ap John dydd geve 2 howses and 2 gardenes towards the foundacon of the said howse to mayntayne a lampe bornyng before the sacrament day and nyght the rent thereof is yerely ... ... o 10 o

Num. II.

Comput. Ministrorum Domini Regis temp. Hen. VIII.

(Abstract of Roll 29 Hen. VIII., Augmentation Office.)

Nuper. Priorat. de Uske infra Epat' Landaff. Com' Monm'.

Uske Firma terrarum dominicalium ibidem ...	28	1	7
Uske Annuitas ex Castro de Uske	2	o	o
Uske Prat' vocat. Gwern	o	7	o
Uske Prat' vocat. Prior's Mede	2	13	4
Uske Unum orreum cum Xmis de Stratney ...	o	5	4
Glascoyle Decimæ garbarum...	o	16	8
Whitfelde Prat' et decimæ	o	12	o
Uske Unum molendinum juxta fluvium ...	o	6	8
Uske Prat' juxta Gweyn Grelocke	o	6	8
Lambadok. Firma terrarum	o	3	4
Llambadok Terr' vocat Sayson ibidem ...	o	6	8
Uske. Unum burgagium cum tertia parte alterius burgagii ibidem	o	10	o
Trostrey Unum tenementum	o	7	o

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Lambadok reddit' terrarum	0	5	6
Lambadok Tyrkennen messiag' sic vocat	0	2	0
Langom Septem parcella terrarum	0	7	8
Lanlowell Pastur' Pencarek	2	0	0
Lanlowell pastur' vocat Eny. Yuall	2	0	0
Lambadok Terr' vocat' Lyny	0	1	8
Uske Un' parcell' terr'	0	2	8
Lambadok Duæ parcella terr'	0	1	8
Uske Bosc' vocat. Priors wode	0	7	4
Uske Redd' cert' terr' arabil et prat	0	10	0
Uske Parcella terr' vocat Prior's close ...	0	2	0
Uske Terr' jac' apud Pollidam	0	6	4
Uske Un' parcell' terr'	0	8	0
Uske Teñtum infra burg' de Uske	0	3	4
Uske Terr vocat' Pelbeden	0	3	0
Uske Unum tenementum	0	6	8
Uske Pratum vocat' litil medewe	0	4	0
Uske Claus vocat' Somerles	0	8	8
Uske Terr' vocat' Ham	0	15	0
Uske Un' parcell' terr'	0	3	4
Uske Un' parcell' terr' arabil	0	3	0
Uske Un' parcell' apud Glaverkey	0	0	2
Uske Un' mesuag' cum gardino in Villa ...	0	4	2
Uske Una parcella terr'	0	4	9
Langom Ysham Reddit'	0	4	2
Uske Teñtum infra burgum	0	12	4
Langom Redd' terr'	0	3	4
Uske Redd' in Olwystrette	0	1	8
Langom Teñtum et terr' arabil'	0	3	4
Tostre Decimæ	1	6	8
Uske Un' teñtum cum gardino	0	6	4
Uske Terr' voc' Gwerllodd yerley	0	4	6
Uske Cert'. parcell' terr'	0	1	0
Uske Terr' et. teñt	0	2	9
Langom Unum tenementum	0	0	8

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Uske Redd Terr' vocat' Pulledam	o	5	o
Uske Priors Mill	o	6	8
Uske Un' teñtum	o	5	o
Uske Terr' vocat Terr' Henry	o	1	o
Langom Terr' et prat	o	7	7
Langom Cert' terr'	o	3	3
Langevey Terr' arabil' et bosc	o	2	5
Uske Terr' I. Gloney et Kay	o	8	4
Bristere Terr'	o	o	4
Uske Terr			
Uske Terr' vocat' Tere' Glos.	o	1	o
Uske Un' parcell' terr'	o	3	6
Uske Un' tenementum et terr'	o	1	2
Uske Duo tenementæ	o	1	o
Langom Redd' terr' et prat'	o	6	8
Uske Una parcella terr'	o	1	8
Longom Redd' terr' vocat crostnayne ...	o	o	2
Langom Terr' voc' Pyllond	o	2	1
Gloucester Terr et X^{mæ}	2	o	o
Begeworth et Thyrneton Terr' et. X^{mæ} ...	16	6	8

Num. III.

Particular for grant to Williams 35 Hen. VIII.

Augmentation Office.

Memorandum that I, Roger Williams doo require to purchas of the King's highness by vertue of his grace's comission of sale these

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manours and pcells mencioned and expressed in the particulars hereunto annexed, according to the value and rate made of the same. In witnes whereof I the said Roger have subscribed this Cedule and sette my seall the daie and yere expressed in the rate underwritten

P. Rogerum Williams.

Nuper Priorat. de Uske auctoritate Parliamenti suppress, Sowth Wallia.

	£	s.	d.
Scitus prædicti nuper prioratus de Uske in parochia de Uske in comitatu Monmouth. valet in			
Firma ejusdem Situs, unacum omnibus domibus ibidem superedificatis, ac uno clauso terræ eidem annex. cont. per æstimationem 6 acr. in manu Jacobi Whitney, per indenturam sub sigillo domini regis curiæ augmentationem revercioneæ coronæ suæ quam non ostenditur per annum	0	12	0
Una clausa terræ vocata Penkank infra dominium de Uske, in parochia de Llandowell in comitatu prædicto. valet in			
Reddit ejusdem clausi cum pertinentiis in manu Philipi Williams per indenturam sub sigillo communi ibidem quam non ostenditur per annum	2	0	0
Unum pratum et una pastura vocat le Ham infra dominium prædictum in parochia de Llangevey in comitatu pradicto. Valent in			
Firma dicti prati jacenta juxta Gweyne Gwhelog unacum dicta pastura jacen juxta Poynt a Clewyn nuper in tenura Jenkyn			

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Baker et modo in manibus Walteri Henry et Joanna uxoris. s. per indenturam sub. Sigillo conventuali dat. 8$^{vo.}$ die Octobris anno regni regis Henrici 8^{vi} 25to protermino 30 annorum, per annum ... ... o 6 8

Diversæ parcellæ terræ cum uno messuagio, uno cotagio, uno molendino acquatico; existen, infra dominium, prædictum in comitatu prædicto in parochia de Lanbadog.

valent in

Firma novem acrarum terræ arrabilis et prati in tenura Thomæ Jevan ap Thomas et Matildis Williams per indenturam sub. sigillo communi datam 20 die Septembris anno regni regis Henrici 8^{vi} 24to pro termino 99 annorum, per annum ... ... o 5 6

Firma unius messuagii cum gardino adjacente ac. cert. terr. vocat, Tere. Keven in tenura pradict. Thomæ Jeven, Thomas et Matildis Williams per indenturam sub sigello prædicto datam 20 die Junii anno regni regis pradicti .25 pro termino 60 annorum per annum ... ... o 2 2

Reddit certarum aliarum terrarum in tenura Phillipi Edwards, per copiam curiæ secundum consuetudinem manerii per annum ... o 1 o

Reddit unius molendini acquatici vocati le Priore's Mille in manibus Walteri ap Jone et Walter Harrie, per copiam curiæ secundem consuetudinem prædictum per annum ... ... o 6 8

Reddit duarum parcellarum terræ in tenura Willelmi Thomas alias Clerk. per copiam curiæ secundem consuetudinem manerii per annum ... ... o 1 8

Reddit unius tenementi cum certes terris eidem annexatis in manu Edwardi ap Jone per copiam curiæ secundum consuetudinem manerii per annum ... ... o 6 8

Reddit, unius prati vacati Terewason in tenura Willielmi Thomas ap Jnor^{co} Howell per indenturam sub sigillo conventuali per an ... o 6 8

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Reddit, unius parcellæ terræ nuper in tenura Johannis Bedo et modo in manu Gweullian Thomas per copiam curiæ per annum ...	o	6	8
Unum messuagio cum unum cotagio ac diversis parcellæ terræ existen. infra dominium et comitatum prædict ac in parochia de Uske. val. in			
Reddit unius messuagii vocati Tyr y. Gloney et Kay Adams cum pertinentus in manu Howell Adams per copiam curiæ secundum consuetudinem manerii per annum	o	8	4
Reddit unius cottagii cum gardino annex. in tenura Howell ap Jone per copiam curiæ secundum consuetudinem manerii per an. ...	o	o	2
Reddit certarum terrarum vocat. Cokeshute in manu Johannis Phip Sayer per copiam curiæ secundum consuetudinem manerii ...	o	10	o
Reddit unius parcella terra in tenura Anna Vergh Thomas per copiam curiæ per annum	o	4	9
Reddit certarum terrarum cum uno tenemento situato apud Llancayo in parochia prædicta, in tenura, Johannis Morris Ltn ap Gwillam per copiam per annum... ...	o	10	o
Reddit. unius prati vocati' Gwerne Stockhouse in manu Willielmi Phip alias Gwynne per indenturam sub. sigillo conventuali ...	o	7	o
	7	12	3
Septem parcellæ terræ jacentes infra dominium de Uske in parochia de Langom et in comitata prædictó. valent in			
Reddit dictarum septem parcellarum terræ vulgariter vocatarum Gwirloid Season in manu Henrici ap Thomas per indenturam sub sigillo conventuali quam non ostenditur per annum	o	7	8
Una parcella terræ cum uno tenemento in parochia de Troistre in dominio et comitatu prædicto. Val in			
Redlit unius parcellæ terræ nuper in tenura Jacobi Morres et modo in manu David ap Powell ap Glin per copiam per annum ...	o	3	6

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Reddit unius tenementi nuper in tenura Howell ap Glin Thomas et modo in tenura David ap Howell ap Glin per copiam per annum 0 1 2

The answer to Master Chancellor's Letter.

Theys pcelles before mencyonyd be no members or pts of any Lordshippes, manours, or graungys, amountyng to above the sum of fourtye powndes by yere neither ys there any psonagis, advoysons, chauntreys, or any other promocyons spirituall pteyning to the same nether do they adjoyne to any of the Kyngs houses, forests or chaces, and who wold purches the pmysses the Audytor knoweth not, but only this bringar The wodes to be certified by Master Cooper keeper of the Kynges woodds.

P Edward, Gostwyk. Auditorem.

12mo die Marcii anno
regni regis Henrici VIII
35, pro Rogero Williams

The Scite of the Priory of Uske, &c.

Memorandum, the Kynge must discharge the saide Byer of all encumbrances except leasez ande the rente before reserved

William. Saint John
Thomas Wriothesley
Richard Ryche

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